

City of St. Helens City Council

Special Session Minutes

March 11, 2020

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Ginny Carlson
Councilor Keith Locke

Members Absent: Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs and Special Projects Coordinator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Others: None

1) **4:14 P.M. - Call Special Meeting to Order**

2) **Council Development**

2.A Review Group Agreements

Council discussed that improvement is needed with:

- Asking questions prior to the meeting to be prepared.
- Being clear when giving direction to staff during meetings.
- Following-up with citizens after public comment is made during meetings.
- Managing presentation time. Include time allotted on the agenda or use the timer.
- Reminders prior to meetings.

Council read the group agreement.

2.B Roles: Governance vs. Administration

- Council sets the mission, vision, goals, and policy.
 - Council and staff define objectives.
 - Staff develops tactics and delivers projects.
 - Council and staff evaluate and identify improvements.
 - Staff implements improvements.

3) **Review 2/26 Goal Session and Updates**

Reviewed the current mission:

Mission:

To provide quality, effective and efficient service to our citizens.

By doing so we will:

- Develop and preserve the highest possible **quality of life** for our residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Provide a **safe and healthy environment** within a **sound economic framework**.
- Provide leadership which is **open and responsive** to the needs of the community and **works for the benefit of all**.

Reviewed the proposed mission and vision:

Mission:

To provide quality, effective and efficient service to our citizens.

Vision:

- Develop and preserve the highest possible quality of life for our residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Provide a safe and healthy environment within a sound economic framework.

Provide leadership which is open and responsive to the needs of the community and works for the benefit of all.

Five main goals:

1. Effective Organizational Structure
2. Enhance Community Engagement
3. Support and Enhance a Safe and Livable Environment
4. Economic Development
5. Long-Term Planning

4) **Working Dinner**

5) **Debrief Independence Visit**

The Council members who attended the visit to Independence to see their project shared what they learned. They briefly went through the PowerPoint that was shown at the visit. A copy of the PowerPoint and visit notes are included in the archive meeting packet.

6) **Break to Clean-up & Regroup (10 minutes)**

7) **Group Exercise**

7.A S.W.O.T. & Mark Top 3 Priorities

STRENGTHS:

- Sense of community (Scholl)
- City-owned property (Locke)
- Location (Morten)
- View (Locke)
- River (Locke) / Waterfront (Topaz via Walsh)
- Watershed property (Scholl)
- Room to grow (Morten)
- Railroad connection (Topaz via Walsh)
- Workforce (Topaz via Walsh)
- Assets (Locke)
- Recreation Opportunities (Carlson)

- Partnerships (Scholl)
- Cultural assets (Topaz via Walsh)
- Service groups/Non-Profits (Locke)
- Physical infrastructure/utility capacity (Walsh)
- Political and agency support/relationships (Walsh)
- Control destiny of City-owned property (Locke)
- Tourism/community events (Scholl)
- Risk tolerant (Walsh)

WEAKNESSES:

- Cleanliness
- Budget - only a \$1.908 tax base (Scholl)
- Family-wage job loss (Carlson)
- Limited public transportation (Carlson)/Poor roads (Topaz)
- Location (off the main I-5) (Locke)
- Railroad divides city (Morten)
- Too much City-owned property (Locke)
- Building permit process; includes serving Columbia City (Scholl)
- Staff overworked; everybody is busy; look at 2007 staffing levels (Scholl)
- Organization Chart/Efficiencies
- Economic property development (Locke)
- Lack of Communication/Trust (Topaz)
- Aging labor force (Topaz)
- No vocational training facilities (Topaz)/Trained workforce (Barry)
- Incubators to improve economic development in community/partner with high school (Morten)
- Youth activities (Locke)
- Patchwork planning and no neighborhood associations/community planning (Topaz)
- Communication and marketing to the community of what the City is doing (Locke)
- Not having a standard definition of a standard wage job (Topaz)
- Not accepting outsiders (Topaz)/Non-exclusivity (Carlson)
- Lack of working relationship with the County (Topaz)
- Poverty mindset (Topaz)
- Need more positive thinking (Topaz)

OPPORTUNITIES:

- City-owned properties (mixed uses) (Scholl)
- City department efficiencies (Locke)
- Teamwork at all levels (Morten)
- Grant writing (Carlson)
- Partnerships (Carlson)
- Community and business reach-outs (Morten)
- Hiring experts for projects (Locke)
- Empower staff to work on projects (Scholl)
- Leadership capacity (Scholl)
- Clarity on properties and projects
- Measurable results
- Financing - low interest funding (Scholl)

- Waterfront property (Topaz)
- Basalt (Topaz)
- Fiber optics (Topaz)
- Abundant land for industry and housing (Topaz)
- Space - room to grow (Carlson)
- Watershed property - timber revenue (Scholl)
- Leadership to instill more pride in community (Morten)
- Council Orientation/On-boarding/Role of liaison (Locke)

THREATS:

- COVID-19 Pandemic (Scholl)
- Recession (Brown)
- Special interest groups (Scholl)
- Politics (Scholl)
- Media misinformation or lack of (Scholl/Carlson)
- Fear/hesitation
- No unified voice (Topaz)
- No measurement/evaluation (Topaz)
- Emergency preparedness/Cascadia threat
- Cyber threats (Scholl)

Council marked their top three priorities for each category.

8) Discussion to Synthesize

Next Steps - Connect Goals to Priorities

Barry will compile the priorities and bring it back to the next meeting.

Discussion of a community project to put down dirt and grass seed on the Waterfront property.

9) Adjourn - 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor